

REMARKS

Claim 1-8 are currently pending as amended hereinabove. Claims 2-8 all depend directly or indirectly from independent claim 1.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Japanese Patent 09-269409 (Higuchi et al.). The argument advanced in support of this rejection is set forth in item 3 on page 2 of the Official Action and not herein repeated.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,796,578 (Hosoi et al.) for the reasons advanced in item 4 on pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action, and not herein repeated.

Claims 1-16 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Hosoi et al. for the reasons advanced in item 5 on pages 3 and 4 of the Official Action, and not herein repeated.

Claims 1-11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112(2nd Paragraph) for the reasons advanced in item 8 on page 5 of the Official Action and not herein repeated.

Claims 12-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and (103) over Celeste (U.S. Patent No. 3,448,089) for the reasons set forth respectively in items 9 and 10 on pages 5-6 of the Official Action, and not herein repeated.

Claims 1-16 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a) over Masaki et al. (EP 0602 252 A1) for the reasons advanced respectively in items 11 and 12 on pages 6-7 of the Official action, and not herein repeated.

Claims 2-4, 8-13 and 16 have been further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Kushi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,356,754), and Lipson et al. (U.S. Patent No.

4,239,849). Claims 2-4, 6, 8, 12-13, 15-16, claims 2-4, 8-13, 15-16, and claims 2-4, 6, 8, 13, 15-16 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated respectively by Uchida (U.S. Patent No. 4,692,396), Geissler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,495,271) and Iwasaki et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,629,680). These grounds for rejection are discussed at items 13-17 on pages 7-8 of the Official Action and not herein reiterated.

Applicants respectfully traverse each and every ground for rejection raised by the Examiner in the outstanding Official Action and listed hereinabove. In view of the amendments to the claims 1-8 and cancellation of claims 9-16, the Examiner's arguments in support of those rejections that might otherwise apply to claims 1-8 are now deemed moot.

Specifically, claim 1 now recites the phrase "consisting essentially" and thereby excludes the presence of the cross-linking compound. Support for the elimination of a cross-linking compound is found in the specification, *inter alia* in the paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7. This amendment overcomes the various rejections of claims 1-8 based respectively on Higuchi et al., Hosoi et al. and Masaki et al., each of which teaches the presence of a cross-linking compound.

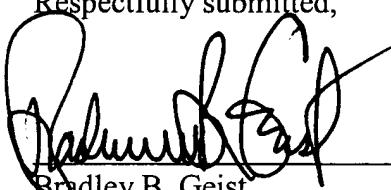
Further claim 2 has been amended to recite the presence of compound B "up to about 15 mol%". Hence, compound B is always present. This amendment effectively moots the grounds for rejection in items 13-17 which were predicated on the absence of compound B.

The amended claims also now moot the §112 rejection, since compound B is recited as an essential compound in the claimed compositions. Claims 2 as amended now eliminates the possibility that no compound B is present.

In view of the cancellation of claims 9-16, no comments are deemed necessary to address the Celeste reference or the Higuchi et al., Hosoi et al., or Masaki et al. references that would otherwise be applicable to claims 9-11.

In view of the amendments and remarks hereinabove, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims 1-8 which are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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